

### REMARKS

Claims 15-20 have been added. Therefore, Claims 1-20 are pending in the application. The Examiner rejected claims 1-14 in the above mentioned Office Action.

#### Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1, 5 and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Larson (US 3,555,171 hereinafter, Larson). Applicant respectfully disagrees. Independent claim 1 and, thus, also dependent claim 5 and 12 include limitations neither disclosed nor suggested by Larson.

According to the independent claim 1, the present invention relates to an apparatus for sealing a conduit comprising:

- (a) a housing having an inner chamber and an outer surface;
- (b) at least one free running hub disposed on, and mounted to, said housing adapted for coupling to at least one end of the conduit; and
- (c) a flexible membrane disposed within the inner chamber of said housing adjacent to said at least one free running hub.

The Examiner cited independent claim 1 in his reasons for rejection in section 2 incorrectly, thus, missing limitations which are not disclosed by Larson or any other prior art. The Examiner stated that Larson discloses "*at least one free running hub (G) disposed on, and mounted to, said housing (B) adapted to said at least one free running hub (G);*" However, the independent claim of the present invention includes the limitation:

- (b) at least one free running hub disposed on, and mounted to, said housing adapted for coupling to at least one end of the conduit;

Thus, the free running tub (20; 22) as shown in Fig. 1 is defined to be mounted to the housing (16) and adapted for coupling to at least one end of the conduit (12). Larson, on the contrary does not disclose a conduit at all. The Examiner pointed out that element X in Figs. 1 and 2 of Larson is the conduit. Applicant respectfully disagrees. A conduit is a device for receiving one or multiple wires according to the present invention. Larson shows two single

wires X and Y which are connected through the arrangement B and G. However, no conduit is disclosed or suggested. Because there is no conduit used in the Larson arrangement, there is also no coupling between the hub and the conduit present as claimed in limitation (b) of claim 1 of the present invention. Larson, on the contrary, even describes that the cup shaped element G is fitted loosely over the outer diameter of the wire. *See* Larson, col. 2, ll. 73-75.

#### **Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103**

Claims 2-4, 6-11, and 13-14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Applicant respectfully disagrees. Claims 2-12 are dependent on independent claim 1 and, thus, include all the limitations of claim 1. Therefore, these claims are patentable at least to the extent of independent claim 1.

With respect to independent claim 13, the same arguments made above apply, namely Larson neither discloses a conduit nor a coupling between the hub and the conduit.

#### **New Claims**

New claims 15-20 are submitted. The new independent claim 15 comprises all the limitations of claim 1 and further includes limitations directed to the coupling between the hub and the conduit and housing, respectively. To this end, claim 15 defines the coupling as a set of female threads arranged at the inner surface of the hub. Therefore, conduit and housing comprise a respective complementary set threads.

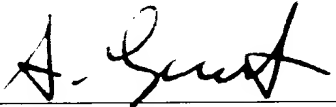
## SUMMARY

In light of the above remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection is respectfully requested. Applicant further requests to defer any necessary amendment of the drawings until allowance of the claims. Early notice of the allowance is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner have any questions, comments or suggestions in furtherance of the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the agent of record by telephone or facsimile. If there are any fees due with the filing of this Response, including any fees for an extension of time, Applicants respectfully Petition the Commissioner for such an extension and direct that any and all fees be charged to Baker Botts L.L.P., Deposit Account No. 02-0383, (formerly *Baker & Botts, L.L.P.*) Order Number 002905.0110.

Respectfully submitted,

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